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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA IMMEDIATE  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8122  
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH 4912  
RUEHZN/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 3340  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5886  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 1472  
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 0903  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0366  
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 1608  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//USDP/ISA/AP//  
RHMFISS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC//J2/J3/J5//  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-3//  
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI//J00/J2/J3/J5//  
RHEFAFM/DIRAFMIC FT DETRICK MD//MA-1A//  
RUEHSUN/USUN ROME IT

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MLS, EAP/EP, INR, OES/STC, OES/IHA, MED,  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE AND GH  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (STERN)  
HHS/OSSI/DSI PASS TO FIC/NIH (RGLASS AND FENG-YING LIN) AND OGHA  
(WSTIEGER/LVALDEZ/MABDOO)  
USAID FOR ANE (CJENNINGS, MWARD) AND GH (KYAMASHITA, KHILL)  
CDC FOR COGH (SBLOUNT), CCID (SREDD) AND DEOC  
USDA PASS TO APHIS, FAS (OSTA AND OCRA), FSIS  
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC (MMALISON), USAID (MACARTHUR/ CBOWES), APHIS  
(NCARDENAS), REO (JWALLER)  
BEIJING FOR HHS HEALTH ATTACHE (BROSS)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: NORTHERN VIETNAM FOOD POISONING OUTBREAK MAY BE ANTHRAX

REF: A. HANOI 694 B. HANOI 588

[11](#). (SBU) The Vietnamese media recently reported a food poisoning outbreak in northern Ha Giang province, along the Chinese border, resulting in at least two deaths. Early reports suggest an epizootic association with anthrax and there is no known evidence of bioterrorism. Officials acknowledge 420 cases, with three persons remaining in critical condition, from the outbreak, which began on June 21. According to the Ha Giang preventive health center, victims from 90 families in rural Po Qua Hamlet in Meo Vac district fell ill after consuming meat from two water buffalos belonging to a local family. The family shared the meat after its two water buffalos died of unknown causes.

[12](#). (SBU) Earlier today, the Ministry of Health (MOH) sent an investigative team, consisting of representatives from the Vietnam Administration of Preventive Medicine (VAPM), the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE), and the National Institute for Infectious and Tropical Diseases (NIITD), to Ha Giang. Due to the isolation of the province and poor transportation infrastructure, it will take the team at least two days to arrive. The U.S. National Institutes of Health has offered to collaborate with MOH, the Ha Giang Provincial Preventive Medicine and Meo Vac District Health Center in the investigation of this outbreak, primarily through serologic testing and building laboratory capacity. The focus of the collaboration would be aimed at serologic testing and building laboratory capacity. The U.S. Embassy health attache continues to discuss other possible U.S. assistance with NIHE, which is implementing the Government of Vietnam response.

13. (U) Animal anthrax outbreaks occur sporadically in Vietnam, though no water buffalo infections had been reported since last year. We had not heard of a human case for several years. Vietnam continues to suffer from numerous food borne disease outbreaks, including four waves of cholera that have struck northern Vietnam over the past several months (refs A and B), the most recent of which continues to impact the Hanoi area.

MICHALAK